

# Students for Students 2007

## Final Report

Community Development Project  
Mpumalanga, South Africa



Editor: Vanessa Carter

## **I. Introduction**

In late June of 2007 the Student Movement for Real Change brought 18 university students from across the United States to a rural community in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa to volunteer in neighboring primary schools with local children and teachers. This report intends to describe the group's experiences and document the successes and failures of this pilot project.

Students were divided into three teams to implement service projects and impact three separate communities during their five week stay in South Africa. The first week participants attended meetings with local politicians, educators, and youth in Cape Town and Johannesburg before their arrival to Utha Community in Mpumalanga. The first two weeks in Utha, the three teams of students managed educational and recreational programs at the primary school of each community, keeping the average attendance at 100 African learners per community.

The second two weeks in Utha were spent offering local educators assistance with supplemental teaching lessons during regular school hours and after school adult education that focused on learning computer basics and navigating the internet (where available). In addition to working directly with students at each primary school, program participants initiated several service projects and by the end of their time in the communities had completed building two libraries, clearing a soccer field, and hosting six community-wide health days that featured local nurses speaking about healthcare facilities, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and teenage pregnancy. Students volunteered extra time during late afternoons and weekends to tutor at the local high school, paint a preschool, teach computer skills at a neighboring primary school, and facilitate an international pen-pal program.

The group worked tirelessly through several challenges during their five weeks together to make a sustainable impact in these communities. The Student Movement is pleased to report on the dedication and hard work of every participant and looks forward to repeating the successful project bi-yearly in the future.

## **II. Philosophy and Objectives**

Local community members, women, and students are the ideal leaders of international development. By working directly in local communities and responding to their expressed needs and concerns; empowering women to manage projects on-site; and supporting student leadership through college campus initiatives and directly in the field, issues of global health and education can be most effectively addressed. Students around the world are encouraged to develop deep relationships with the community members where they work and to identify practical solutions that involve community participation.

The Students for Students pilot program set out to develop not just classroom curriculum but team-building amongst the community's youth and adults as well as capacity-building and trust-building within the community towards the common goal of sustainable development. One of this program's primary objectives was to empower program participants to become leaders by giving them various management responsibilities and opportunities to act as facilitators while

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

completing educational field work. The students were given free reign in their work to identify development projects in their communities or schools, utilize extra time to tutor, or complete independent research.

The local community youth became essential for the success of all our activities and projects. They served as translators and in some cases as facilitators in camps and in our service projects. We named the U.S. program participants AMPS (American Participants) while our South African counterparts are called SACS (South African Counselors) to avoid confusion about which students are being referred to throughout this document. The first two weeks allowed the AMPS to manage and plan their own educational and recreational camps. This leadership development opportunity gave each group member the independence to be creative and initiate effective ways to impact the communities. The project planners hoped for the camps to strive for teaching purposeful and worthwhile activities that would engage African students in understanding valuable lessons that would spread to other community members over time. To help the AMPS prepare for managing their camps, team leaders each prepared an activities manual that included the SMRC philosophy for teaching that emphasized youth empowerment and critical thinking and several ideas for games and activities that could be utilized during their first two weeks.

Team leaders emphasized to each of their groups the importance of debriefing and communication during camp and throughout their experience in South Africa. Dialog and discussion was highly encouraged with the African students and amongst themselves. It was decided that all final organizational and logistical decisions should be made by each groups' participants. The activities manual recommended setting up rotations of one hour split up by three distinct components (Arts/theater, Sports, and Education). Another proposed idea was theme days that would incorporate a variety of lessons under one broad issue. For example, one theme might be health. The group would plan for an arts activity, a sports activity, and an educational lesson all related to an agreed upon list of health ideas to teach. A section of the activities manual is located below for future reference:

### *Viruses*

Ask students to brainstorm a list of diseases and then we talk about their lists. Tell them you have discovered a new disease, the "Fizzies Virus."

#### Tools:

- One small cup (7 oz.) per student
- Water approximately 3 oz. per student
- 3 oz. of hydrogen peroxide (drugstore/home strength)
- Sharpie Marker
- 4 oz. bleach (in a small wide mouth plastic container)
- Medicine dropper (for bleach)

#### How to:

Part 1: Students have their paper lettered A-C. They are to decide who to exchange with. Person A of the pair carefully pours their entire cup into Person B's cup. Person B carefully pours about half of the liquid back into Person A's cup. They write down on their paper who they exchanged with in order. Each student repeats the procedure twice more. When they finish they go back to

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

their desks and sit down. (Please tell the students how important it is to follow these directions. They SHOULD NOT exchange with the same person twice.)

Part 2: The teacher goes to each student and drops 2-4 drops of bleach into their cup. If it fizzes, the cup is infected. (Say the cup instead of the child. This prevents any teasing.) The liquid is safe enough to be poured down a sink. The students with "infected" cups are listed on the board or overhead (could have students copy this information).

The students with the "Fizzies Virus" cups are asked to name the students in order that they exchanged with and those names are written down. The class tries to detect who had the original "infected" cup. This will look like a web/graphic organizer. It is sometimes easier to see, who was not the first "infected".

### ***Health Lessons***

This is such a broad and extensive topic, consider a weekly "health day," in which one day each week is devoted to relevant material. There are many related computer programs, and countless simple activities that have potential to leave a lasting effect on the community.

**Activity on hand washing** (the single easiest way to prevent the spread of disease) Consider using song or dance to make concept more fun.

### **Teeth brushing**

#### **What is health? A discussion**

**Another idea:** During one of the weekends, holding a community health day. We could perform community outreach the week before and have a whole day- offer workshops on some of the aforementioned activities, record basic medical information, explain maladies such as high blood pressure and healthy practices, not only to students but all members of the community

## III. Shiviti Primary School

### **Team A**

**Kris Ansin, Team Leader**

**Kaitlin Walter**

**Bethany Eroh**

**Elizabeth Arkell**

**Megan Barry**

**Cameron Henderson**

### **Overview of Team A's work, progress and recommendations**

During the month of July 2007 six participants worked in the same community our entire group lived in: Utha village. This report will focus primarily on the Shiviti Primary School that serves just fewer than 300 students in grades 1 through 7.

This report highlights the work attempted, activities completed, and recommendations and thoughts developed from 6 pairs of eyes and ears on the ground in the community for one month. Elizabeth Arkell, Megan Barry, Bethany Eroh, Cameron Henderson, Julia Kaitlin Walter, and Kris Ansin all became very attached to the community and hope that this document will further the strong work so many locals and outsiders are already engaged in.

### **Community Assessment**

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

On our first full day at Shiviti we hoped to complete a community assessment, however, we were surprised to be greeted by 75 elementary school students. After some games brainstormed on the spot, we were able to sit down with a handful of youth, aged 13-24, to get to know them and learn some of their perspectives on the community and its needs.

An overview of our findings

- Closest hospital between 15-20 kilometers away
- Clinic a priority
- With clinic, running water/ more functional pumps also needed.
- Community dusty and smoky- creates acute respiratory infections
- No one place for children to gather and play outside of school
- A need exists to emphasize the importance of education

### **CAMP - Community Action and Movement Program**

Following the Community Assessment, for the following two weeks, the team of American volunteers, partnered with a dedicated group of young adults (SACs) from the community, created a program directed at elementary school students in the area, facilitating activities from sports to art to education.

The structure of the program was very similar to a typical summer day camp in the United States. Activities and lesson plans were created the day before the implementation. The group of six American volunteers broke up into three or four groups, generally with one or two people in each group. African students would get into 3-4 groups and engage in each activity on a rotating basis so that every student would have the opportunity to participate everywhere. The stations themselves were relatively fluid, but the general themes kept to the original recommended rotations: Arts, Education, and Sports.

The young adults (SACs) in the community became an integral part of the program. Each day, one volunteer was placed with each of the student groups. Typically there were enough volunteers to allow for every group to have between 3-4 SACs. As the program continued, and as the volunteers become more comfortable with their roles, their responsibilities increased. Their primary responsibilities began as translating and assisting in keeping order, but many quickly assumed different roles, most importantly actually teaching the lessons themselves. This increase in responsibility culminated in the second-to-last day, when they assumed the main responsibilities and the American volunteers simply helped them in any capacity needed. From lesson planning to implementation, organization and facilitation, they responded effectively and enthusiastically to the task at hand and performed admirably in their new positions of leadership.

*Sample schedule of typical day:*

8:30-8:45: American and South African volunteers arrive

8:45-9:15: Stations and projects set up, overview of the day with Americans and South Africans

9am-9:15: Students arrive

9:15-9:30: Full group circle, usually consisting of a song or two, overview of yesterday's activities and today's

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

9:30-10:15: Break up into four groups and facilitate first round of stations

10:15-11: Rotation

11-11:45: Rotation

11:45-12:30 Rotation

12:30-12:45: Closing circle, students depart

12:45-2:30: Activity with SACs and young adult volunteers from the community. Included but was not limited to community assessments, health information sessions, teambuilding activities, computer lessons

3-4:30: planning the next days activities

Our group put a lot of time into lesson planning, both because we emphasized the idea of working together, as well as collective brainstorming on a daily theme. One of our biggest goals was emphasizing English education. However, rather than conducting lessons in a classroom with a chalkboard and a “read and repeat” learning method, we emphasized daily themes, such as health or family, to reinforce words in many contexts throughout the day.

### Overview of activities from CAMP

#### Day 2: “My favorite things” Day

- Opening Activity – Jigalo (song, favorite among the youth)
- Art: Bandana bracelets
- Sports: Soccer and netball
- Education: Making journals from construction paper and yarn. Writing their favorite activities, toys, etc.

#### Day 3: Environment Day

- Opening Activity: Making Rain (using vocalizations and hands to create a storm)
- Art: Nature rubbings
- Sports: Games (pulled from a giant list created, attached)
- Education: “Water” song

#### Day 4: Health Day

- Opening activity: Hokey Pokey
- Art: Beaded necklaces
- Sports: Stretching and games
- Education: Song and top 10 list of easy ways to live healthier

#### Day 5: Field Day

Doing away with typical stations, the day was devoted to friendly competition and games among participants. Each of the four teams chose a team name among themselves that became their group identity for the day (lions, tigers, leopards, zebras). At the stations students competed in track events (relays, long jumps, sprints), field events (three legged races, wheelbarrow races, sack races) rope events (jump rope, tug-o-war), and ball events ( 4 square, dizzy bat, kickball).

#### Day 6: Education Day

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

- Reading: Large and small group reading
- Math: Team problem solving and competition
- Writing: Letter to Mbeki
- Opportunity/future: Drawing, announcing, how they see their futures

### Day 7: Community Day

- Art: Create painting/coloring of home
- Sports: Shiviti trash pick-up
- Education: **Acting out assets in Utha???**
- Song: The UTHA song

### Day 8: Self Empowerment Day

- Art: Name signs for doors
- Art: Paper plate self portrait and bio
- Education: “Bring me...” performance opportunities
- Sports: Games

### Day 9: South African Leader Day (run entirely by the young adult volunteers)

- Poverty and Communication: Lesson on each concept and how they are related
- Art: Self-portraits
- Theater: Reading and singing
- Sports: Games

### Day 10: CAMP closing

Informal first half divide entire group into three different groups. Organized similarly to field day, students played large games of kickball, circle ball, and a variety of rope games. Midway through the day we came together for a full group gathering under the tree and had a talent show. Most of the young adults, South African and American, acted in small performances, while many of the younger students participated as well. Preceding this was a final closing, acknowledging the young adult volunteers, and handing out handwritten diplomas to each participant.

### **Sports Games**

Stretches, Lions vs. Impalas (modified sharks and minnows), Red light/Green light, Duck Duck Goose, Simon Says, Hokey Pokey, Kickball, Knockout (soccer or netball), Circle ball, Relays, Soccer drills, Dizzy bat

### **Songs**

#### **The Water Song (sung to Old Macdonald)**

We need water to survive  
It keeps us alive  
And if you drink it every day  
You can run and play  
It's in our food, It's in the air  
You'll find water everywhere  
We need water to survive  
It keeps us alive!

**The Health Song (sung like a rap)**

Listen everybody to what I suggest  
To keep your body healthy, and live your life best

Wash your food before you eat  
Wash your clothes, stay clean and neat  
Use clean water when you drink  
Go to school to help you think

And wash your hands- ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch  
And wash your hands- ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch

Don't throw your rubbish on the ground  
Use a net when the rain falls down  
Keep your shoes on your feet  
Brush your teeth once you eat

And wash your hands- ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch  
And wash your hands- ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch

These are some tips to help yourself  
To stay happy and keep your health!

So wash you hands- ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch ch

**U-T-A-H! (Sung to YMCA)**

Yo man, I go to Shiviti  
Yo man, lots of fun for you and me  
You can learn there, and make lots of friends  
You never want it to end

It's fun to live in the U-T-A-H  
It's fun to live in the U-T-A-H  
From when the roosters crow  
To when the sun is low  
I know just where I want to go

Yo man, obey family and teacher  
Yo man, listen to the preacher  
He will say things, that I shouldn't forget  
Like be nice and always respect

Chorus

Yo man, I always work hard  
Yo man, at my home or school yard  
It's my future, and I'm going far  
But I'll always love my Utha

Chorus

'Cause we are Shiviti  
My brothers and my sisters with me  
Yeah we are Shiviti  
Get up everybody and sing!  
(repeat)

### Health information sessions

Health was one of the most important areas to our group mostly because of the young adult demographic. We held small health information sessions at Shiviti of 40 people, and a much larger session at Manyangana, of roughly 200 people.

After our original community assessments and roundtables, we found that sexually transmitted infections (STI's), HIV/AIDS, and other gender issues, were quite common in the area, though rarely discussed. After an original conversation with the young adults we worked closest with, we held an informal gathering, separated by sex, of the oldest children attending our program, as well as all the young adults we worked with.

The session went as follows:

Two conditions were immediately stated: 1) that we, those standing at the front of the room, were not experts, simply young adults, like them and 2) an open door policy was in effect- they could leave at any time. Beyond that, again, separated by sex, the AMPs spoke briefly about HIV/AIDS, STIs, how it affects the communities around the world, and what we each can do to protect ourselves. Among other things, **we learned that many Shiviti students were engaging in sexual acts, as young as ten or eleven years old.** After that session, paper and pencils were handed out for the audience to ask anonymous questions. After which, condoms were distributed. We continued to distribute condoms for the rest of our time in the community. We had brought enough so anyone could discreetly request protection. A comprehensive list of typical questions is below. After the formal session had concluded, many, particularly the older participants, remained to continue the discussion.

Our discussion at the high school ran very similarly, however, rather than inexperienced foreigners at the front of the class, local nurses from the clinic were brought in to talk, and did so in their native tongue. This helped overcome a language barrier on an already sensitive topic. With nearly 200 in attendance, including the village *Induna*(elder), the questions and follow-up were intense.

After these health days, talking with members of the community and being a part of it for only a month, the planned clinic will strongly benefit their community (along with running water, it is the most sought after asset in Utha). However, health is not only medicine, and a clinic will be more productive with programs such as community support groups and an well-funded HIV/AIDS prevention program. A young man we worked closest with claimed that, in terms of AIDS education and outreach they (those in his community) receive “the leftovers from the big cities.”

**Common questions posed by those in attendance during health days**

- Can you kiss someone who is HIV positive?
- What are the options for someone who is positive?
- What sexual practice can and can't one do?
- Can I use paper rather than a condom?
- How does HIV/AIDS kill you?
- How do you know if you are HIV/AIDS positive?
- How can I prevent HIV/AIDS?
- What can/ can't you eat?
- Can you smoke/ drink?
- Where does HIV/AIDS come from?
- How long can you live if you are positive?
- What is the difference between an STI and an STD?
- Where can we get condoms?
- Where can we get information?
- How do I, as a woman, tell my partner I am positive? How can I say no when he wants to have sex?
- How can I protect my loved ones? If I have HIV/AIDS will it spread to my wife? Will it spread to her baby in the womb?
- What about breastfeeding if positive?
- Can an HIV infected person cook for you?

**Evaluation of Shiviti Primary School**

NOTE: The following portion was prepared for the educators of Shiviti School.

***Background***

After spending two productive, fun-filled weeks working with the educators and learners at Shiviti Primary School, the American participants of the Student Movement for Real Change program have assembled a comprehensive report from our collective observations. This document is both a compilation of the many strengths shared by the school's educators and learners, as well as suggestions and feedback for the school. The report is aimed at providing an even stronger academic experience for the many unique learners that call Shiviti their own, aiding both educators and learners in the creation of a more fruitful, exciting learning environment. This has been a truly unique experience in which the American participants of the Student Movement for Real Change have gained new knowledge and are grateful for the

opportunity to spend time working with the staff of educators at Shiviti Primary School. We thank all of you for your time spent with us, but also for dedicating yourselves, daily, to the betterment of South Africa's youth. We are honored to have been given the opportunity to work alongside and learn from you.

### *Strengths*

1. Educators command the respect of the classroom of learners in an appropriate and effective manner. When an educator walks into a room, the class immediately becomes attentive and silent. Learners do not typically speak again until they are spoken to by an educator. Having had our own experiences working in these classrooms, it is an excellent quality in a teacher that requires time to master.
2. Learners are eager to learn and to hear what the educator has to say about a given subject. It is apparent by the behavior of the learners that they want to attend school and to learn. You, as educators that can speak both Tsonga and English, use that quality well, using English as much as possible while reinforcing with the native tongue when necessary. (It should also be noted that the majority of our time was spent in grade 5, 6, and 7, where learners' English capability are higher than the rest of the student body.)
3. The posted learning outcomes show that the educators have created a goal oriented environment. All educators are aware of the goals that they are working towards in each term, and they have the ability to refer to them often when planning their lessons.
4. Posted schedules of school maintenance provide order to the school. These schedules show that both educators and learners care about the school and its upkeep. By taking care of the school, learners and educators show that they have school pride.
5. Staff meetings create a cohesive environment for teamwork that allows all educators to work with the same goals in mind. Further, staff meetings ensure that lasting relationships are formed that permit a learning environment is created not only in the classroom, but in the surrounding area.
6. Educators are eager to learn additional information. Whether it be afternoon computer training from volunteers or hired help, attending conferences, or simply taking the time to learn from each other, it is clear the educators recognize the value in furthering their education for the overall benefit of the learners. Additionally, educators are open-minded about finding new ways to present their lesson plans.
7. Educators have successfully instilled a sense of community pride in the learners regarding their own culture and the culture of Africa. This sense of pride instills self confidence in the learners and develops an even greater sense of learning.

### *Suggestions*

While this list may look somewhat comprehensive, keep in mind the simplest changes can be the most effective. It is imperative to arrive to every class on time. Always have a prepared, interactive lesson plan. Changing something as basic as the organization of the classroom to be more learner-friendly can be the difference between a good teaching environment and a great one.

1. Staff Meetings – Rather than holding staff meetings in the morning, staff meetings could be held in the preceding afternoon. This will increase the amount of educational time for learners. In the event that a meeting cannot be held in the preceding afternoon, learners could be given class related activities to complete while the meeting occurs.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

2. Lesson Plans – Preparing lesson plans is an integral part of the learning process. Having weekly objectives with each daily lesson building upon the last creates a learning system with visible results. Lesson plans should expand upon the ideas listed in the curriculum books while still remaining within the goal oriented policy you have developed. This can be implemented by having each educator develop at least one creative, interactive activity a week for each grade level in each subject area. While implementing such activities might be difficult in the beginning, educators can keep their lesson plans documented in a notebook that can be kept as a reference from year to year.
3. Computers – Despite recent internet and server difficulties, Shiviti’s computer lab is an extremely valuable asset. Strengthening one’s own comfort with computers is the only way to aid the students in developing their own competency. Even without internet access, allowing students to develop skills such as basic typing, searching, and gaining an overall level of comfort with the computers will help them immeasurably in the future. The students at your school are at a perfect age to be introduced to computers, as they will grasp it quickly at a younger age. Spending additional time in the lab as you are already doing with hiring outside assistance will help immensely. Additionally, students should spend additional time in the computer lab each week.
4. Time Management – In the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, from half past seven in the morning, until ten past one in the afternoon, students are taught ten thirty minute classes with one forty minute break. While very ambitious in terms of all the education one learner could absorb in a single day, it seems that reconstructing a daily schedule could further maximize their learning. Thirty minutes to introduce, implement, review and allow all the students time to finish any activity designated, while trying to remain on schedule, is simply not enough time. If an educator begins class only three minutes behind schedule in a thirty minute class, ten percent of the time allotted is already gone. Furthermore, shifting subjects so quickly and so often does not allow learners enough time to fully absorb some of the topics being taught. Holding fewer classes for longer periods every day would reduce lost minutes due to transition and allow more time for students to become fully engaged, absorb a lesson, and write down any necessary information, while still providing the same amount of overall time for each subject. Additionally, restructuring the schedule would give more time to educators to convey those messages clearly and effectively without feeling rushed.
5. The Importance of Writing – Writing things down forces the students to think about the message on the board, even more than when they are listening to the educator. By writing constantly, they must actively conceptualize words, charts, or math problems throughout class time. Written class work as well as constant written homework in all classes would further benefit the student body. Learners should be held accountable for completing their homework on a regular basis. Learners should be given positive feedback on correctly completed homework. Finally, educators can utilize time after school to hold tutoring sessions for learners who need extra help in a given subject area. Such study sessions might be held on alternating days, such as Tuesdays and Thursdays or Mondays and Wednesdays.
6. Rearrangement of the Classrooms – Rather than sitting in the current group format, having learners face their desks and chairs towards the front of the classroom will create a more personal learning environment between educator and learner rather than the learner and their group mates. Also, students are less likely to become distracted by other

learners in the class if they are facing forward toward the educator. Finally, by dispersing students of all different learning abilities around the classroom, gifted learners can be given the opportunity to aid classmates who need extra help in a given subject.

7. Further Cultural Education – Cultural education should be expanded to expose learners to various cultures from around the world. A strong love and respect of community is imperative, however, those sentiments can be further cultivated by teaching learners other cultural perspectives. By being taught a variety of cultures, learners will become more well rounded in their education and feel proud of their own traditions.
8. Critical Thinking – Critical thinking and problem solving are not easy concepts to grasp, however once understood, they are extremely beneficial inside and outside the classroom. Simply asking students “Why?” when teaching a given lesson is an effective way to increase this process. Encourage students to ask more questions, refocus at times from a “read and repeat” format to one in which students engage in their own dialogue and develop their own answers. Although understandably difficult with a large number of learners in one classroom, student participation should be valued, again encouraging their own learning and thinking for themselves, as stated in Shiviti’s learning objectives.
9. Extra books – During the assembly of the new library, going through all the books both around the walls of the original room and through the storage room behind the computers, it is evident there are some books Shiviti simply has no more use for. If this is the case, it would be great to get some of those books still in fine quality to the learners that would use them for their own benefit. There are many activity books, many that improved English and reading comprehension, and books are a wonderful resource for any topic. If allowed, a book swap or giveaway to alleviate the school of some of these books, as well as a great opportunity for your learners would be a valuable notion to undertake.

### The Jackie Craven Library

As a final project with the youth of the community, we constructed a library at Shiviti. The space was available, as were a number of stacks of books, old and new, good and poor condition, curriculum guides and reading books. The extended group of us cleared out the space, bought materials, painted bright colors on the walls and floors, created a mural, (thanks to one of Utha’s finest young artists), tiled the floor, created shelves, organized the books into subjects, installed desks and chairs, and had a memorable dedication. One of the hardest working teachers volunteered to be the school librarian and took on responsibility for the space.

Constructing this library with others in the community, leaving something positive behind for the Shiviti School is something our volunteer team is very proud of. Our experience here has been so valuable and life changing that adding something to such a great learning environment only seemed fitting. We hope that educators utilize this new space for the educational benefit of the students. The library has been arranged to accommodate all learners, but you as educators hold the responsibility to see that this space is used often and effectively.

We hope that the library will be used during and after class hours. Currently, the facility is arranged in a way to accommodate roughly twenty-five to thirty students. Learners can pull books from the shelves and read at desired tables or floor space. Additionally, there are excellent

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

references for learners- curriculum guides for all topics taught in school, activity books, and encyclopedias for any sort of research project.

Typically, a library is designed as a holding space for books, where individuals can “check out” books, meaning through a designed system they can bring a book or two home with them and return them at a later, previously specified date. Because of a time constraint, this system will not be implemented by the time the American volunteers have departed, meaning, there is no accountability system in place for students to check out books. Our thoughts were that while learners and educators were becoming familiar with the new facility, books would remain there to be read when the library is open. Once a comfort level has been established, a “check out” system could be implemented. This could be as simple as having a designated notebook at the front of the room and recording which students takes out which book, ensuring that they are held accountable to return it by the specified date. Another option is placing note cards in each book with all of the necessary literary information written in it. When a student wishes to check out a book, the librarian or designated teacher will remove the card as well as noting the person’s name, so, again, the book may be returned correctly.

Library rules should also be established. Obviously we, and you as well, take great pride in this new resource for the school, and it should be treated as such. It is not a place for lots of students to flood into during break. The number of students in the library should compare to the numbers allowed in the computer lab- a controlled, quiet group, eager to read and learn. Eating and drinking should not be allowed in the room, and a friendly learning environment should always be encouraged. Talking while working in a small group on class assignments is acceptable, however, conversation should be kept to a minimum. The walls, floors, tables and windows have all been painted and cleaned and should remain that way. Sweeping the room, making sure cleanliness is always followed, is also a priority. In order to ensure these guidelines are followed, it might be in the best interest of the school to identify a Librarian or Library Monitor from the school faculty.

It should also be noted that this new resource would be an effective means both to involve the community’s youth mentioned below, as well as a potential beginning to an after school program at Shiviti. Allowing learners to stay after school and use the space to read or quietly do their homework both encourages further learning, and gives students an after school activity, which, it seems at times, some are lacking and could certainly use. Please ensure that one educator or staff is always present, however, when the library is in use.

Furthermore, as you will notice, the shelves in the library are not yet filled. Despite access to more curriculum books from the storage area, this is not an oversight. We want to provide additional space for more books to accumulate over time. On the side of the American volunteers, we have already expressed interest in a book drive when we return home, bringing new reading books over the next time someone from our organization comes to Utha. Thus, this extra space should be used effectively. The library should not be filled with books that no one will read or books with many copies readily available. The library should encourage discussions and exploration into new ideas.

### **Computer lab**

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

During our time in Utha, and particularly in the afternoons of the last two weeks when school was in session, some time was devoted to basic computer training for the teachers of the school on a volunteer basis. Due to time restraints, our lessons remained basic. However, for other reasons the lab has been a completely underused resource.

For the entire month of July, the students would have been learning valuable lessons on the computers: the internet and new programs that would connect them globally. Instead, they collected dust; the result of a few confounding factors. First, there is a complete lack of technical assistance and knowledge on the ground. While the server was down, no new programs could be added; meanwhile, there was no internet connection. It was very generous to install this wonderful system, but without follow-up, it will likely not be used effectively. Secondly, the teachers must be more adequately trained in the management and technical aspects of the lab. Because they have little knowledge about computers, they are uncomfortable teaching students how to properly use them.

### Conclusion

Our time living in Utha and working at Shiviti has been incredibly productive and rewarding. It, admittedly, has changed each of our lives. Our hope is that this document does not serve as a period at the end of a long sentence, marking an end of this program. Rather, after interacting and working alongside with, and listening to local community members, we offer upon your request several suggestions that could serve as a catalyst for more positive change in the community.

- Employment/creating opportunities for those we worked closely with, particularly those individuals that have already matriculated and would be an asset to many organizations, particularly those involving children. They are truly special people who work very hard to create an opportunity for themselves if given the chance.
- Establishing a similar CAMP program the next time school is on holiday, this time having the young adults running it, in the positions that the American volunteers were in the first time: working together on planning and implementing,,an educational program for local children. Volunteers could help oversee the program but the majority of the work would be implemented by these talented locals.
- An after-school program at Shiviti that utilizes the resources of the library. This type of initiative could keep children in school for longer hours and provide them extra access to academic assistance.
- Youth Ventures for the young adults in the community.
- Additional health information sessions.
- (When the clinic is constructed) Community groups, HIV/AIDS prevention teams
- Chalk tablets in schools for mathematics class to keep them in the class room. (As mentioned in the suggestions within Shiviti, students benefit greatly from writing things down).
- A trash program.
- Increasing the use of the computer labs, beginning with technical assistance and “how-to” knowledge.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

- Allocating small funds for students to create their own projects to benefit community.
- On the proposed soccer field funding: As a long term project, to coincide with the construction of new fields, implement a Sport for Social Change program. Institute an after school program utilizing sports. Tying it into academic standards, health classes and the World Cup would increase the appeal of these important issues to young learners.

This extensive description identifies ways in which we as outsiders to this wonderful community were able to work alongside the locals to strengthen a community that is already so rich in many ways. We hope this report is helpful and constructive, and look forward to our next experience in the place we can now call “home away from home.”

### IV. Samson Primary School

#### **Team B:**

**Vanessa Carter**, *Team Leader*

**Shelby Ikeda**

**Candice Roush**

**Luke Penn-Hall**

**Julie Curtiss-Lusher**

**Katie Charles**

#### **Overview**

Samson Primary School is located in Makrepeni Community and has 12 usable classrooms that are used by 9 teachers to educate 300 students. Students aged 4 to about 16 attend classes from kindergarten level to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Several subjects are taught everyday on a rotating schedule for 4-7<sup>th</sup> graders including Tsonga, Afrikaans, English, technology, math, life orientation, and social sciences. The head administrator is Alfred but our primary contact was Deppa Mathonsi, a teacher of over 12 years. The Telkom Foundation donated a computer lab that has 20 computers (15 usable ones) with internet. The Buffelshoek Trust also donated a vegetable garden that is maintained by women in the community. The produce from the garden feeds members of the community and pays for certain maintenance costs of the school.

Our group decided to use the first day at Samson to complete a brief community and school assessment. Deppa arranged for certain outstanding youth in the community who could speak some English to meet with us that day. After our group met with Deppa and Alfred we walked around through the nearby neighborhoods in pairs to speak with community adults about their needs and to collect demographical information. Below is a sample of our results:

#### **House 1-Elsie.**

Six people in house-4 Children, 1 girl and 3 boys-- Husband and Wife married 15 years. Husband owns a store, wife wants job but there are none. Elsie born here. All children go to Samson except youngest one. Family receives children grant from government (200 Rand per child). Clinic is in Gottenburg. 7 Rand taxi to get there and back, 10 km away. Taxi or borrow a car. Biggest need is to “have a good life.” This means work, schooling for children, to give children all they need. Also no water—Utha is closest pump (2-3 miles). Community needs employment opportunities.

**House 2-** Older man. Lives alone. Two children with mother. No work, gets a monthly grant.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

Health: leg problem since he was young, goes to clinic if in pain. Clinic comes here every Tuesday. For water, he has someone who works for him who fetches water from Utha. School water is off limits. Likes school there because children go there and are happy. Not born here. Religion is Sotho; goes to church. Three biggest needs? No needs—he is happy. Was married and got divorced. Community needs jobs.

House 3-Sly. 18 years old. Lives with his uncle and uncle's three children. (Sly is also married with a 5 month old baby). Went to Manyangana High School. No job—would like to be a doctor or engineer. Needs a “car and a gun to protect his car from robbers.” Says in the community cigarettes, hallucinogens (sniffing drugs), and alcohol are popular. For fun: dancing and futbol, nothing to do. Schools need sports fields.

House 4-Cedric. Paid others to build house in 2000. 3 people in the house, all born here. Man with wife and grandmother. Cedric works at the mine—lives there with other men for two months at a time then has 2 days at home. Sends money home “maybe.” Wife works at Gottenberg clinic but is only temporary work. Needs: water, church, playground. HIV/AIDS exists—Wife says when people find out they are positive, they change too.

House 5-Young woman in green jacket. Eight people live here (4 children). Two of the eldest attend Samson. None of the adults are related. Good health for her family, community has bad health. Acornhoek to buy groceries (10 rand to get there and back with taxi). Thinks education of Samson is good—computers are important. She was born here—lived in this house for 5 years. Community needs jobs. Dreams of being a pilot.

After the community assessment the group felt more knowledgeable about the circumstances of the neighboring families and came to an agreement that Makrepeni seemed significantly more impoverished than Utha.

### **Summary of Camp Component**

The group spent a significant amount of time planning for camp activities and managing them on a workable rotation schedule. The first several days of camp were fairly organized, but included experimentation and exploration of what lessons flowed well and which ones did not. We also changed the organization of our rotation schedule depending on daily attendance of African students. One of the days was pension day for the community (when the families receive welfare checks from the government and all attend a market in the center of the community to purchase necessary goods) and very few students attended camp. We did not have a general rotation schedule because we altered it on a daily basis depending on the activities we had planned and camp attendance.

We enjoyed great success with several activities, including:

Sports: Circle ball, red light green light, act out vocab words (washing hands etc), spin around bat, kickball/baseball, three leg race, tug of war, jump rope, majaji (cricket/kickball game), sack race, duck duck goose, stretching

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

Arts/Theater: Making beaded necklaces, drawing food pyramids, Simon says with body parts, draw and express certain vocab words like “freedom,” mask making, using dirt and glue to write first name on construction paper, paper chain.

Education/Computers: Phonics activities at [www.sadlier-oxford.com](http://www.sadlier-oxford.com), practice typing by copying a letter to Thabo Mbeki, reading aloud, math skills (simple addition/subtraction/multiplication), typing practice at [www.freetypinggames.net](http://www.freetypinggames.net).

Everyday after school from the first day that Deppa had arranged for the community youth (mostly our SACs) to meet with us, we began to discuss establishing a youth forum. We held some round table discussions the first week to try and get a better idea of the community’s needs and wants. Several participants discussed the importance of offering the youth an activity with a sports field, since many came home from school with nothing to do and started drinking alcohol or doing drugs. A sports field was the perfect community project that we hoped to get adults and youth involved in. We began building the field at the end of our second week with the help of our SACs. With their help we were able to work quickly and cleared out a large section in a few short days.

### **Health Issues**

Our interest in HIV/AIDS education began during our first week working at Samson during one of our roundtable meetings with the local youth. We broke out into small group discussions to candidly talk about the community needs and learned about the complex issues the students we were teaching faced everyday. We learned that it is acceptable for men to commit polygamy and infidelity due to long-held traditions and that women often lack a voice regarding sexual choices. This common behavior is not easily changed nor can it be judged as negative. The problem is that along with these traditional customs come health concerns such as STI contraction especially with HIV/AIDS and teen pregnancy. The female youth we spoke to mentioned that men and boys refuse to wear condoms because they are “embarrassed” to tell their friends and have too much pride to change their behavior. They also told us some very young girls (9-11 yrs old) were engaging in sexual intercourse with men either because they were receiving money for sex or hoped to get pregnant to receive the very small government stipend (R200) for having a baby. After our discussion the group decided it was important to incorporate some education on sexual intercourse, STIs, and pregnancy at some point during our time in Makrepeni.

During our second week of Camp we hosted a themed health day that focused on HIV/AIDS education. We held two rotations for the 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> graders to discuss HIV/AIDS and drug and alcohol abuse. The HIV/AIDS component included two parts: first we gave an overview explaining what HIV/AIDS is, if there is a cure, and how to protect yourself; then we split the group by gender and allowed males and females to ask questions anonymously. The anonymous question and answer period was especially successful for the females because there was a very capable translator; however, there were a couple questions we had trouble answering and encouraged the students to go to the nearby clinic for more information. Fourth through seventh graders were also shown a “how to use a condom” demonstration and free condoms were distributed. The drug and alcohol rotation explained alcoholism and a few drugs’ effects on the body. A lesson on being “drug and alcohol free” was also taught.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

After camp ended, our SACs and local youth stayed to receive an HIV/AIDS lesson as well. We repeated the same as before but had much more difficulty keeping order and respect in the classroom. We told them that if they did not want to be there they could leave. This approach effectively increased respect during the lesson. The conversation became more productive and the group of mostly young men repeatedly requested condoms for the rest of our time there.

We held a community health day during our second two weeks at the local community crèche. The *Induna* (community elder) alerted the entire community to attend a meeting at the crèche, as he does monthly by ringing a large bell. At the meeting, we requested and received approval to host a community health day. For the community health day, the group gave a short presentation similar to the one we had given with the students in class. We also brought nurses from the nearby clinic in Gotenburg to speak in the peoples' mother tongue about HIV/AIDS and services at the clinic. We had 80 community members attend and gave each of them a chance to ask anonymous questions that the nurses were able to answer.

We also faced some tough moments that frustrated all of us but helped us to learn and absorb more from our surroundings. One AMP wrote the following about our first week with the Samson students:

“The first couple days were especially hard. Every activity was just too hard and no one understood what we were trying to do. The kids started out really shy but got wilder and open through out the days. There are too many little kids in the morning, some can't even hold pens. However, as we got more comfortable so did they. They biggest problem is that the male SACS treat the females badly and there are inequalities between males and females is apparent. They do like to learn and SACs who can translate. They really like the computers but they lack computer skills. They have always been taught to just repeat, so they lack critical thinking skills. The females won't look Luke in the eyes; all children have a serious lack of confidence.”

Although everyday we were learning new things about the community and the people's situations, we were still forced to continue creating applicable lessons and making a strong effort to uplift the community in any way we could. The cultural differences were never more evident than the language barrier. We were challenged regularly with limited communication, especially with the younger children and some of our SACs. Proper and reliable translators were absolutely essential for nearly every activity. We could not have completed a successful community health day or many of the HIV/AIDS education lessons without a translator.

### Summary of Supplemental Teaching Sessions

The routine we adjusted to during the first two weeks of camp was quickly forgotten as soon as Samson Primary returned to regular school session. The regular process of school was a new schedule to adjust to and working with the Samson staff were the new challenges for the second two weeks. We spent a couple days working with the teachers to sort out how we would fit into the regular schedule and exactly what would we be teaching. Thereafter we began to settle into a new routine that involved 4-5 of us working with every grade level in the computer lab while the other 1-2 AMPS were assisting educators in classrooms teaching Life Orientation or English courses. After the regular school day ended we would offer adult education to the teachers who

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

were interested in learning about how to use the computer. In the later afternoon we arranged on certain days to have our SACs meet us and continue working on the field.

The computers were an amazing resource for us and turned out to be something we had a lot of knowledge to offer everyone at Samson. At first we thought the younger kids were too young to be in the computer lab at all because they have never touched a mouse or seen a computer monitor and truly struggled with very basic lessons. However, using the program “Paint” turned out to be the perfect first-time user tool for learning. It allowed the younger students to play with the mouse and to be creative. We asked them to draw certain shapes, draw their names, and play with the toolbars to create new designs. At the very end of our time with them we explored the Encarta Encyclopedia (that Daniel Armanios had installed during our first week) and allowed them to listen to music with the headphones. The music and even the paint program truly lit up the kids’ faces and they seemed so inspired. Every afternoon we had trouble keeping them out of the computer lab for the rest of our time there.

The older students adjusted easily and enjoyed their computer lab lesson time. We gave them a lot of practice time with typing with the wonderful online typing program, [www.freetypinggame.net](http://www.freetypinggame.net) and also introduced Microsoft Word. We used the Sadlier-Oxford website that had great Phonics activities with the 4<sup>th</sup> graders to play simple word and letter games that allowed the students to practice using the mouse and sometimes the keyboard. Eventually we demonstrated Encarta Encyclopedia articles and asked them to search for certain topics like “Mpumalanga” and then answer simple questions. They were then supposed to type the answers in a Word document. It was a successful assignment that taught valuable lessons about research and gave them practice typing. On our very last day we gave them time to listen to music on Encarta because it seemed to fascinate them.

Outside of the computer lab, Julie and Shelby gave several HIV/AIDS lessons during Life Orientation classes. Luke taught English to 7<sup>th</sup> graders several times and was very well liked by one particular staff member who appreciated Luke’s efforts and his native English skills. Candice was able to teach the first ever special education class to a few students and because of her efforts the staff members are considering the continuation of a special education class in the future. She left information about special education and how to deploy those types of courses. The afternoon adult education classes were only partially successful because they were only able to attend the first few days. The educators seemed to be too busy to stay at school after their work day. We did show them the online typing program so they could practice their typing skills and demonstrated some basic information about Microsoft Word. We also showed them where we had logged in “favorites” all the internet programs we had used with the students so they could continue our computer lessons.

Our final day at Samson, the staff and head administrator held a farewell ceremony for us including a BBQ, known locally as a *Braai*. All the students of the school attended and sang to us. A couple students read poems or made touching statements about how they were sad to see us go and would keep us in their hearts. We each also offered a goodbye speech to thank the school for their support and assistance during our time with them. We emphasized that this was the beginning of an amazing relationship and we looked forward to working with them again in the future.

## **Field and Crèche**

In the late afternoons we spent some days working on the field with the SACs and eventually also with some of the students who attended Samson. Deppa organized for some of the 4-7<sup>th</sup> graders to bring tools from home to help us clear the weeds from the field. After they began helping Deppa and the Head Administrator took the project farther and decided to clear out an area twice the size of our original plan. They finished after we left and have reported that students have started playing on the new field. We would like to eventually purchase goal posts to make the field more functional.

On Monday of our last full week, Shelby and Vanessa went to the neighborhood crèche to hang signs for our community health day and discovered that the broken windows were not the worst of this large, poorly maintained building. The inside rooms where the crèche lessons were held were covered in graffiti and the place was not in an acceptable state for children to use for playing and learning. We decided our group should take on the challenging task of painting a couple of the rooms and if we were financially able to replace the windows. We knew we had a limited time period but it seemed crucial that we do something about this building. The crèche was more like a small school; it's very large with three big rooms and a small locked room also. The community meetings held by the *Induna* (Elder) take place outside the crèche on the ground because there are no chairs nor are the rooms very inviting.

We spoke to Deppa and he directed us to paint the bottom half of the walls a dark color and the top half a lighter color because crèches are painted like that so the walls do not get so dirty from the kids. He also recommended we get one of our SACs, Mandla, who had been helping us with the field to paint with us because he is an artist. We hired him to paint a mural on the walls of the crèche. We also split our time between painting the crèche and working in the computer lab so that we could have people constantly working on both projects. By the end of the week we had finished the two rooms and had replaced the broken windows in the entire building. Mandla was nearly done with his mural and we were very pleased with the progress we had made in such a short amount of time.

Deppa has many plans for the crèche. He would like to turn the space into a Community Learning Center, which would offer:

1. Adult education (job training, computer skills, building skills, plastering skills, garden project skills, HIV/AIDS and parenting education).
2. Youth education: Tutoring center after school and during weekends, health and HIV/AIDS education, political education.

SMRC intends to support Deppa and the community's initiatives in Makrepeni, and the members of Team B will provide guidance and technical assistance, as requested, to advance this dream.

## **V. Mashlati Primary School**

### **Team C:**

**Saul Garlick**, *Team Leader*

**Juliet Mohnkern**

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

**Lauren Ogrich**  
**Michelle Moller**

**Sarah Burns**

### Overview

Mashlati Primary School is located in the community Shortie. The school opened in 1983 and teaches over 350 students with 11 teachers in 9 classrooms. There is a computer center, but no library. Daily lunch is provided by the Department of Education and consists of oranges, beans, cabbage, bananas, and juice. School hours begin at 7:30 and end at 13:00 and include several periods including language, math, natural science, economic management, life orientation, art and culture, and social science.

Our first day at Mashlati we immediately struck by the school's philosophy. Posted on the wall of the principal's office was the vision of the school: to equip learners of our institution with knowledge skills and values, that will enable them to fulfill a productive role in society, through provision of quality, relevant, and sustainable education. Mashlati's vision was the same as any the dreams of any school in the United States, yet it faced a myriad of challenges as it moved towards that vision.

One teacher, Gift, shared her thoughts on areas in which Mashlati most need to improved. She emphasized that students needed to learn to take responsibility in order to be the best possible members of the community. In addition since children without parents lack any encouragement to attend school and uneducated parents are unable to assist children with homework, there needs to be community-wide support for students. She also stated that Mashlati needs more classrooms, a library, a science laboratory, flushing toilets, a new staff room, and scholarship money for students to attend university or a process for assisting graduates find employment after graduation.

After seeing the school and meeting with the staff, we held a round table discussion with five young men from the community. These young men, who later became leaders within our programs, cited the major challenges in the community as: lack of an accessible clinic (75% have poor health), alcohol, cigarette, and hallucinogen use beginning at an early age, and gender inequality. When we asked them about the topic of HIV/AIDS, the group stated that most people will not use condoms if intoxicated even though the clinic supplies the local café with free condoms. Young children are not being taught HIV/AIDS awareness and no one is getting tested, many are fearful of the results. After discussing these issues, these young men became our guides and translators as we split into pairs and interviewed other members of the community. The following is a sample of their results:

1. Older man and woman: would like us to teach children to become thinkers and to be aware of HIV/AIDS. Major issues in community: violence caused by outsiders and lack of education. She said there is nothing good about community. This interview was particularly striking since we had assumed that the older people in the community would be shy about talking about HIV/AIDS. Contrary to our assumptions, however, these individuals not only brought up the subject of HIV/AIDS, but requested that we teach the children about it.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

2. 31 yr old woman: lives with four children and is deeply concerned about HIV/AIDS problem. She is too shy as a mother to talk about HIV/AIDS with her children. Community needs: education, HIV/AIDS education, nursery, and employment.
3. Group of teenagers, all students. Three boys and one girl carrying an infant. All Shangaan and Christian. All agree on low infant mortality rate. HIV/AIDS is a big problem and testing would be ideal for everyone. No one feels safe walking around at night. Community needs: clinic, sports field, and a bottle store.
4. Older woman who has owned the café since 1983: there are two people in house but sometimes up to 16 children as well. She is Tsonga, not Christian (“God did not give me children”). Community needs: clinic, community projects, nursery. She would like us to teach students about TB, HIV/AIDS because there have been many deaths in the community. She enjoys owning the café. It started out as a shack in 1983. Says it is the only place to get food and helps many people. The clinic is too far away.
5. Group of teenagers: interested in future jobs as police officer, pilot, nurse, teacher and would like to learn more about health, HIV/AIDS, and history. Community needs: water (there is an electric pump but it doesn’t work all the time), employment, sports field. They know about condomizing and consider it to be very important. They believe it is good to be open about these matters. They stated they would not change opinions about people that are HIV positive. “Friends will always be friends.”
6. 45 year old woman and 19 year old man: four people in house with two children. Woman works in housekeeping and is a waitress at the lodge. The man is a H.S. student in grade 11 and would like to be a judge. They are both Tsonga and Christian. Woman believes community needs clinic and toilets. Man believes the community needs police station, clinic, and a library. They both commented on the gap between men and women and that the best part of the community is traditional dance.

### Summary of Interviews

As we reflected on these interviews later that evening, we began to realized the major areas in which we should focus our work while in Shortie. We saw HIV/AIDS arise as a constant theme in all our conversations. Rather than the community rejecting the idea of our group dealing with the topic, community members consistently encouraged us to education the children about this issue.

### Camp

During our first two weeks at Mashlati we organized a camp for our students. On the first day we developed an organizational schema in which the students rotated through different activities in four colored groups: Red (oldest), Green, Yellow, Blue (youngest). We decided to divide our camp into four sections: Education, Arts & Theater, Interactive Learning and Sports. Each of our group members ran a different activity often with the help of a SAC. We spent reevaluating what had worked well and what had not, and making plans for the following day.

### Overview of activities at Camp

#### Day 1:

Sports A: Stretch, Chinese freeze tag, kick ball, duck duck goose

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

Interactive Learning: Sit sit go, red light green light, human knot, alphabet game, tag  
Arts/Theatre: Make up own song w/ leader, human knot, draw picture of community  
Education: Simon Says, Basic body games to practice body vocab

### Day 2:

Sports: Stretch, relay race, tug of war  
Arts/Theatre A: Mask making explaining how masks and stories relate to each other.  
Interactive Learning: Zippity Do Dah song, finish journals, tell stories, play charades  
Education: Colors, spelling bee

### Day 3:

Sports: Stretch, relay race and tug of war, kick ball, dump ball, circle games, cat and mouse  
Arts/Theatre: Character development (grades 3-7), Read a story (Grades 1-2)  
Crafts: Storytelling, charades, journals,  
Education: Food Chain instruction, display stuffed animals

### Day 4: HEALTH day

All rotations: Discuss importance of washing hands, brushing teeth and clean water. Introduce the food pyramid and balanced diet. Split into food groups and hold contest to come up with as many foods in that group as possible.

HIV/AIDS education: We went over what AIDS does to your body and how you can get sick. We also discussed how you get AIDS and how the disease spreads using an activity where each student got a cup of water. One student gets water and food coloring. The students break into pairs and mix their water. Then they repeat with different partners until everyone has a little food coloring in it. This parallels how HIV is spread quickly through a small community. We discussed the methods through which it is spread and also discussed measure each individual can take to protect them from the disease. We stressed that the students had the power to end AIDS and practiced telling their partners “I will not have sex without a condom.”

Safety: Taught vocabulary words including: safety, friend, buddy, day, night, health. Explained the importance of going home when it’s dark and about being with a buddy. Played Buddy Tag (if you are running around with your partner, you’re safe. If you are running around alone, then I can tag you out).

Drugs/Alcohol/Cigarettes: Effects on heart, liver, lungs, brains, after drinking and doing drugs.

### Day 5:

Sports: Stretch, potato sack races, circle ball, ring around the rosie  
Crafts: Storytelling, journals, zippity do dah  
Arts/Theatre: Bead necklace making, arm wrestling cooperation  
Education: Ball math, vocab of inside of house, flashcard competition

### Day 6:

Sports: Stretch, relay race, 3 legged race, apples and bananas  
Crafts: Reading, Shape practice, picture making for “life” and “future”  
Arts/Theatre: Puzzle, maze, itsy bitsy spider story, storyboard  
Education: I Spy colors

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

### Day 7:

Sports: Stretch, batting practice, baseball, learn hip-hop dance

Crafts: Alphabet, word toss, cat in the hat

Art/Theatre: Hip hop dance, itsy-bitsy spider, free form dance, make scenes for stories, act out animals

Education: Musical math, typing training in computer room

### Day 8:

Sports: Net ball, circle ball, relay race with jumping rope, telephone

Arts/Theatre: Painting and dance, make costumes

Crafts: Read The Giving Tree, dance, sing, Make necklaces and bracelets, poetry

Education: Human number line, computer room—Encarta

### Day 9: Field Day

First half: Arts and Theatre: performed hip hop dance, performed scenes

Second half: Sports and recreation: Tug of war, 3 legged race, wheelbarrow race, 3-legged race, over and under relay, jumping rope relay, circle ball

### Teacher Assistants in Classrooms

For our second two weeks, we worked side by side with the teachers at Mashlati Primary School aiding them in daily activities. In the morning we each worked in a class of first, second, or third graders, then in the afternoon we worked in grades 4-7. Working in the classrooms, we saw committed teachers, inventive lessons, and engaged learners. We also saw, however, overcrowded classrooms, students lacking critical thinking skills, and teachers leaving classes unattended. In light of these challenges, our goals became focused on providing resources to improve students' ability to be creative problem solvers and workshops to aid teachers in creating effective lesson plans.

### Gift Telani Library

Our vision for the library was to provide books for students and adults to read, study, and discover new ideas and opportunities. We began with an empty classroom, boxes of disused books, and the pledge of community members and teachers to help us in any way they could. When we finished, we had not only created a beautiful library, but also built amazing relationships with the individuals who work alongside us.

We decided the most important materials to start were: paint, paintbrushes, adhesive tile, hammer, floor mats, cinder blocks, wood, cement, glass, putty, hammer, glass bricks. Our plan was to remove books from the room and organize any other mess lying around. Then we would paint the walls, tile the floor, build shelves, and fix the window/roof and door. We hoped to construct a glass brick wall and reading nook, organize books, paint murals and logo on walls and clean the floors.

These were excellent plans, but we quickly realized that none of us had ever fixed a window and that without help it would take us days to sort the books. Luckily, Oupa Lesley, one of our SACS, could not only fix the windows, but could also fix the roof and teach us how to lay

the floor. As for the books, several of the older students from our camp worked with us everyday after school to sort them. Slowly the library began to come together. By the end, it was a room evoked both pride and hope in the community; pride because it was the only library in an elementary school in the area; hope because it symbolized what the community could build when they harnessed the resources around them.

### **HIV/AIDS Education**

Our first afternoon we held a round table with older youth from the community (SACs) and began to get to know each other. They told us they would like to discuss HIV/AIDS, difference between urban and rural communities, family, how to create jobs. Saul delivered a lecture on the general information about HIV/AIDS using the following outline:

#### HIV → AIDS

- How to get it:
  - Sex (bodily fluids), blood (sharing needles), birth
- How to prevent it:
  - Condoms, Abstinence, Be faithful
- Is it curable? No
  - ARVs can be used to stop mother to child transmission and also help in lengthening life span.

GOAL: AIDS Free Generation

One group member felt particularly moved by this session with the SACs and wrote:

“I believe this was a defining moment, in many aspects, for our trip. While answering questions, a SAC admitted he and his girlfriend were HIV-positive and asked if the disease would strengthen if they continued to have sex without condoms. It was a difficult question to answer. It was amazing to see the relief on his face when Saul said ARVs could prevent passing the disease to their future child. After this round table I felt hopeful that the youth in the village can make huge accomplishments in working towards an AIDS Free Generation.”

Again, our discussions with community members emphasized how the shadow of HIV/AIDS hovered over everyone in the community. Every seemed to be touched by the disease.

#### Community Health Day and Health Clinic Visit:

Since we saw HIV/AIDS was a vital issue to broach in our community, we began to plan a Community Health Day during which we would invite members of the community to discuss this topic. We visited the clinic to prepare for our community health day in Shortie so that we could record and report on resources available for HIV positive patients. We were lucky enough to find two amazingly committed and knowledgeable nurses in the clinic: Zilpeih Makama and Sister Permission Nthane. Zilpeih and Sister were able to provide us with important background information about HIV/AIDS treatment in the area.

The nearest clinic to Shortie is in Hluvukani, about 10 minutes driving distance from Mahlathi Primary School. In the main building there are 4 rooms (1 waiting room, 3 patient rooms). The

clinic offers free, confidential testing for anyone who wants to be tested. If someone is HIV positive, an additional test will be performed on the blood to obtain a CD4 count. If the count is below 200, the patient will be transferred to the hospital in Acornhoek where they can receive free ARV treatments. If above 200, regular check-ups every 3 months are encouraged. There are also 4 support groups targeting different populations that meet once a week, for HIV positive individuals. If test results come back negative, the patient should continue testing every 3 months. Women who are pregnant are encouraged to visit the clinic. If the expecting mother is HIV positive, the clinic offers ARVs (1 tablet) to be taken at the first sign of labor pains. Male condoms are offered free of charge but female condoms are not available.

Community Health Day was very successful. Saul and Michelle gave a small lesson similar to the one we had discussed during our first round table with the youth. We split up the attendees by gender and asked them to write anonymous questions for the nurses to answer. During this segment Zilpeih and Sister, the nurses from the clinic gave a presentation and answer questions. Both the women and the men had important questions for the nurses. It was obvious that Shortie needed more consistent access to health care information and resources. It was also obvious, however, there were local resources which could begin to fulfill this need.

Our Community Health Day truly demonstrated the themes of our work in Shortie. It came out of a request from the community. It was the catalyst for our friendship with the nurses, a friendship which showed us the immense talent and capabilities present in the community. It left us inspired with thoughts of what more could be done to make sure the mission of Mashlati, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to fulfill productive roles in society, be realized.

## VI. Manyangana High School

### Math, Science, and Technology Education

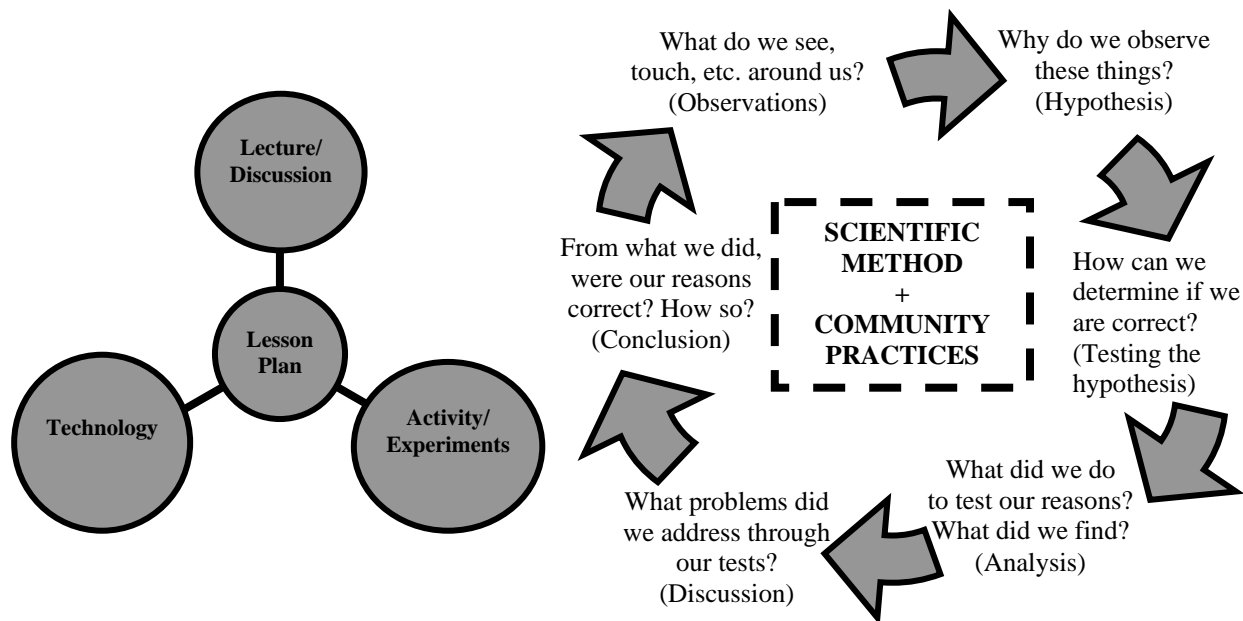
**Daniel Armanios**

*I am never above hard work*

*Zero excuses: because if we are behind, we just have to run faster*

### Preliminary Framework

Before we arrived in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa, the following process and approach for math, science, and technology curriculum was developed.



**Figure 1: Preliminary lesson plan approach incorporating different educational media (left) and utilizing an observation-based process (right)**

These ideas were developed from personal experience as a mechanical engineer and through research of math and science programs performed in similar areas such as Zambia<sup>1</sup>. As shown in Figure 1, the motivation behind this approach was to incorporate as many different educational media as were available on-the-ground<sup>2</sup>. In this way, visual (“seeing and looking”), auditory (“hearing and listening”), and kinesthetic (“touching and doing”) learners each had ample methods to retain and understand information<sup>3</sup>.

By also using an observation-based method, students did not have to rely on unfamiliar or foreign concepts to understand science. They could use what is around them to “make” or understand science. This allowed community practices to be coupled directly with the scientific method as shown in Figure 1. Thus, the concept of science was put in familiar terms through the very *process* used to explore it. This also made mathematics easier to understand because it was presented as the “language” used to explore science. For example, if I want to understand the fundamentals behind the scientific concept of velocity, the mathematics of calculus can be used to explain this concept.

However, what was most important about this approach is that it could adapt to what was available on-the-ground, both in terms of resources and skills. Thus, this approach was robust and rigorous yet also adaptable to change and could evolve as new observations were incorporated into the process.

### Field Observations

<sup>1</sup> “COSM-ZASE: A Collaboration in Education”, *COSM outreach and QuarkNet*, Hampton University, Jan. 2006, online, <http://www.jlab.org/~cecire/cosmzambia/cosmzambia.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Before the trip, we were informed that they would have Windows XP computers with Internet capability.

<sup>3</sup> A basic summary of these learning styles is provided by the University of South Dakota at: <http://www.usd.edu/trio/tut/ts/styleres.html>.

After applying these ideas for about two weeks, the following was observed. These observations both confirmed preliminary ideas as well as necessitated modifications of our approach depending on the age group.

1. For primary and middle school programming, language barrier varied from village to village, but it is was consistently high for scientific terms and concepts. Thus, lessons involving a mix of Xitsonga/Shangaan and English were more effective.
2. High school students had to have working knowledge of English because their state-administered final exams were given in English. Thus, for high school students, activities were done entirely in English to help prepare them for these exams.
3. Primary level students particularly enjoyed singing, dancing, and movement, thus this was incorporated as much as possible in lesson plans.
4. Drawing or other activities that constantly engaged the students were especially effective.
5. Activities that minimized lecturing kept students engaged because it reduced the need for constant translation.
6. Limiting the use of donated supplies was more effective as it emphasized exploring and using the resources around them.
7. Given such low computer skills (some could not even know use a mouse properly), the use of technology had to be coupled with rigorous basic computing training. Thus, the focus of technology was best placed in the context of making it more sustainable. As a result, integrating computer training with a targeted approach designed to reinforce taught scientific and mathematic concepts has also proven to be very effective.
8. For primary level students, the Activities and Discussion sections of our lesson plans could be strongly linked and done in tandem.
9. Distance was an obstacle to learning. Some students had to go 14km to school, and many did not have a form of transportation to do so. Thus, to assist these students, efforts were made to run before and after school training programs and to go to students' houses directly to address any questions or concerns they may have.
10. Students are typically shy but motivated and eager, thus lesson plans were constantly infused with student participation and input so comfort level would be increased.

This work was not limited to students but also to teachers. Thus, this approach was also used to help teachers develop lesson plans and math and science curriculum that met state-required learning objectives. In assisting teachers, the following observations were also made:

1. Teachers also lacked basic computer skills. Many of them could not even type, thus training sessions were also implemented for teachers at their request. These training sessions were not forced on the teachers so as to make progress sustainable.
2. South Africa has just moved into an outcome-based education (OBE) system where students are continuously assessed throughout the year and asked to do projects and “practical work” or homework. However, as OBE is quite new, most teachers were taught under the previous Old Syllabus method, which emphasizes memorization rather than application. Thus, teachers were assisted, on an individual basis as they so desired, with making projects and in-class demonstrations that were more OBE-compatible<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> This was complicated by the fact that the Old Syllabus method was still maintained at Grade 12 despite the fact all other previous grade levels are using OBE.

3. Teachers only used the computer centers they had to complete their own work. Thus, lesson plans were designed to help teachers integrate the use of computers. This was especially important for high school programming as this approach reinforced concepts learned in the classroom while, at the same time, taught basic computer skills<sup>5</sup>.

### Implementation and Results

Two different programs were designed based on the Preliminary Framework and were constantly modified based on Field Observations. The first program was designed for primary and middle school students. In this phase, lesson plans were designed and implemented to be integrated into the Education component of the primary school camps, which took place the first two weeks of our arrival into the Mpumalanga province.

There were three key focuses on these lesson plans. First, the lesson plans were done through a circular process involving Xitsonga and English. Students were asked questions in Xitsonga, and they would answer and write the answers on the board in Xitsonga. Then, the teacher would explain the concept in English, and the students would repeat it. Thus, because the native language was used, math and science concepts were better understood and retained. Furthermore, through repetition of these concepts in English, their English equivalents were also retained. This required a basic working knowledge of Xitsonga, which was obtained through constant communications with the students, native teachers, and community at-large. Second, the lesson plans incorporated community practices. For example, math was taught through clapping and dancing with gestures the students and teachers would create together. Third, the students were kept constantly engaged either through activities such as drawing or through writing answers on the board for the rest of their class. In order to make this sustainable, the approach and process to these lesson plans were explained to both the other American participants as well as the teachers. Thus, all involved could use this process to create their own unique and equally effective lesson plans.

This first phase was designed to be coupled with South African standards for education. Under these standards, science is not a separate subject until grade 4. From talking to both students and teachers, science standards from grade 4 to 8 was largely limited to the natural sciences and basic physical science concepts. Thus, once the lesson plan approach and process from the first phase was explained to both teachers and American participants, they were able to use lesson plans for the human body, basic math, the food chain, and others they created to the first phase of math and science training for the final two weeks. Thus, this allowed for more focus on the second phase of the math, science, and technology program, which was programming for grade 10-12 math and science students and teachers.

The result of this second phase was the following schedule implemented at Manyangana high school in Utha:

*Weekdays*

---

<sup>5</sup> Some examples was using interactive anatomy multimedia on Encarta to help reinforce concepts on the human body and using Excel to reinforce the concepts used to draw and manipulate trigonometric graphs.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

6:00-7:20AM: Math, Physics, and Chemistry (math and science students)<sup>6</sup> or English (all)<sup>7</sup>  
7:20-2:00PM: In-school computer training for teachers and students (during free periods),  
teaching assistant to grade 9-12 math and science teachers<sup>8</sup>  
2:00-3:00PM: English<sup>9</sup>  
3:00-4:00PM: Math<sup>10</sup>  
4:00-6:00PM: Physics and/or Chemistry

### *Saturday*<sup>11</sup>

9-10:00AM: Review  
10-11:00AM: Math  
11:00-12:00PM: Chemistry  
12:00-1:00PM: Break<sup>12</sup>  
1:00-2:00PM: Computer  
2:00-3:00PM: Physics

The main goal of this curriculum was to assist students in acquiring basic science and math knowledge through utilizing products of their environment (marula or monkey fruit) as objects of study. Thus, the focus was made on learning science as a *process* rather than just simply as a series of *results*. By teaching in this manner, the students had the opportunity to question results, which was constantly encouraged. This steered students away from just learning by memorization and encouraged individual thought and creativity. On days when English training was not administered, computer training, particularly in typing and the basics of Microsoft Office, was further provided for teachers and students both in Manyagana high school and at nearby primary schools. This second phase and these additional teacher training sessions were administered for the entire four weeks.

As a result of this teaching process, many students began to implement or ask for assistance on project ideas they created. This spurred the start of mentoring programs involving teachers, particularly Grade 10 teacher Mr. Ralph Sydwell Mhlaba, and students to focus on encouraging

---

<sup>6</sup> This was before school training for students from Gotenburg, Makrepeni, Seville, Dixie, Thlavekesa, etc. who were far away from Manyagana high school.

<sup>7</sup> This morning session was designed to be an opportunity for all students to get more individualized help as needed. If math and science students wanted to do English that morning, it was also made possible for them as well.

<sup>8</sup> This is when I would help teachers develop lesson plans and substitute teach as necessary

<sup>9</sup> Usually during the students' study hall and usually done three days a week or as available. On days without English training, the time was used for study hall or for increased math and science training for those students in that track.

<sup>10</sup> This was after school training for students from Seville, Utha, and those with transportation. Since Utha is a large village, these sessions were sometimes administered on the other side of the village at Shiviti primary school or at various students' houses. Extra sessions were also made at various students' houses if they desired further assistance.

<sup>11</sup> Sometimes curtailed depending on projects or either things, thus this was general guideline but changed based on what students needed more help on or if they had projects to work on. There was also a Sunday session at times, but due to the length of time needed for religious commitments, Sunday sessions were stopped in deference to these practices.

<sup>12</sup> Because Saturdays were truly an extra day of class, lunch was provided during Break to encourage attendance on that day.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

them to explore their own interests in the maths and sciences. Particularly on Saturdays, students would implement their projects, and teachers and American participants would facilitate the progress of these projects.

An example of how this worked was an agriculture project the grade 11 students were doing for a competition. The students applied theory and lessons learned in the classroom to decide what crops to grow, how to irrigate them while conserving the scarce water available, and how to make their soil beds to cultivate these crops. American participants aided mainly in terms of labor and any additional constructive assistance as requested. Thus, from start to finish, the students entirely directed and implemented the project. The American participants acted only as facilitators.

The accomplishments of the aforementioned high school portion of the math, science, and technology education program are best illustrated in the following synopsis.

My students were not just shy but also lacked a great deal of self-confidence. This may be from the fact that their history is one of little exposure to the outside world until only recently. Yes, this has created positive results such as a remarkable integrity and steadfastness to their history and good nature. Yet, this also affected how they saw visitors whom they felt were rich and knew more than them.

The first thing I did was remove this notion...

Eventually, the students felt empowered enough to try their own ideas. One student used a rubber eraser off a wall to explain impulse and momentum. I helped him analyze the problem and then photocopied the solution and gave it to his fellow peers and called it "Home Physics: Nikkel's Rubber Problem". I would call our in-class demonstrations "Home Physics" because I wanted to show the students that you could do these things at home with tools around you. Just think about what you would like to explore or what you want to try to do, and often, sure enough, there is something you can use around you to do it.

Thus, what turned out as just an after-school program teaching math, science, and technology (and even English) became also a mentoring program where I helped the students develop their own science ideas and even helped them with the projects that would result. Before I even came, some grade 11 students has already came up with an agriculture project were they used old plastic Coke bottles and punched holes in them. They then filled them with water and stuck them underground to form a very ingenious droplet irrigation system to use so as to conserve the little water they had while keeping their plants irrigated. I worked the fields with them to encourage them on this project and to show them that no one is above hard work, like my mentor Dr. Calvin Mackie so inspired in me. A set of grade 10 students are now planning to make a car using an old radio motor. Thus, much of my job was to encourage commitment on already thought-of and planned projects as well as empower students to think they could make their own projects.

### Impact Level and Conclusion

Through this focused approach to primary, middle, and high school math, science, and technology education, over 100 classes were taught to over 300 students and 20 teachers in 3 villages. As sustainability was a strong focus of this approach, the *process* was strongly emphasized, and the *results* were derived from this process. As observed in numerous cases, the result was that students were able to teach other students what they learned, and teachers were able to implement and create their own lesson plans based on this process. For example, the primary school program was able to run independently for another two weeks after this portion was completed. Furthermore, teachers adopted the idea of using multiple educational media. For

example, they began using Encarta to create and reinforce their lesson plans, and Microsoft Word to present mathematic equations.

Thus, this program was not just effectively implemented but also was sustainable. The reason for these two successes relies purely in the approach used. It emphasized the scientific *process* and not just its *results*. The approach was further designed to be adaptable to observations made on-the-ground and community practices. This allowed science to complement rather than conflict with indigenous practices, a key component to making a program sustainable.

Currently, this work is being compiled into two books. The first book will be a study guide using this approach to explain various science and math concepts for grade 10-12 math and science students. As was the mission with this process from the very onset, this book is designed to complement and reinforce, not substitute, math and science curriculum already in place. The second book will be an activity book to assist math and science teachers attempting to create lesson plans to address the new OBE standards. This book will explain, in more detail, the ideas and motivation behind this approach used to construct math, science, and technology programming for education. It will then be followed with some example activities and in-class demonstrations that were proven to be effective during the course of this four week program. These books are designed to increase the impact of this work to the greater global community.<sup>13</sup> In addition, a series of publications will be submitted to leading journals such as *Innovations* and *Education for International Development* on the experience of youth-to-youth rural education in collaboration with Student Movement trip participants and the executive director.

## V. Conclusions

The three groups' and Daniel's work left a mark in Mpumalanga that cannot be ignored. More than the tangible structures we were able to create and improve, the participants let their contagious spirits and positive attitudes affect everyone we met in those five weeks. Our enthusiasm motivated the communities and allowed them to take on leadership roles and participate in helping serve their peers with the various projects we initiated together.

In the end, the group had to drag themselves from Utha because everyone wanted to stay longer with the friends, colleagues, and families that had become their own. As difficult as it is to describe our entire experience, it is fair to say that we deeply enjoyed living in the rural South African community. We learned a great deal about rural poverty and the daily struggles of the people in Mpumalanga, but we also left with the same optimistic energy we had when we arrived. We know that we can help the 2.5 billion people living on less than \$2 a day and we look forward to the next opportunity to empower underprivileged individuals.

## Impressions of the Students from the United States

---

<sup>13</sup> In independent work in urban areas of Cape Town, South Africa and even in inner-city Memphis, Tennessee, USA, this approach has proven to be very effective, thus the impact can potentially be at this level.

## Students for Students 2007 – SMRC Final Report

"This experience was about youth impacting youth and making a lasting impact in a community. I feel like I got to relive what my parents went through to get me the opportunities that I have, and I was able to interact with people that were a lot like my own family. I got to connect to my own ancestry which is Coptic from rural Egypt. As an American with immigrant parents, I feel fortunate that I have worked with this community. All different peoples share one common value: an indefatigable human spirit." – *Dan Armanios*

"I think the biggest thing that we may have achieved is not any change that we have made ourselves, but the possibility that we inspired individuals to improve their own conditions. With our collective support and energy, we can uplift any community." – *Michelle Moller*

"In the beginning we had a lot of apprehension about talking about HIV/AIDS, but when we did a community assessment, everyone asked us to talk about the issue. The taboo was gone and we held a community health day a week later. We soon learned the personal stories about HIV when one individual opened up about his positive HIV status." – *Lauren Ogrich*

"The community repeatedly told us that they wanted to improve the conditions at their local crèche. Sadly, nobody felt empowered to make a difference. When we arrived, they asked us for guidance and support, and after we began working with them, it quickly became their project. I feel we made a big difference." – *Katie Charles*

"I came to South Africa to see what I wanted to do with my life, to see what I was called to do. But never in my wildest dreams could I have predicted what I would find in our villages: unconditional love, acceptance, and hospitality. This experience has changed me in ways I cannot even begin to describe. Without a doubt, I know that I am meant to help these people, to work with them to improve their lives and their futures. And at the same time, I have found that they've changed me even more than I could ever hope to help them." – *Sarah Burns*

"We came to the other side of the world hoping to meet people of different cultures and different lifestyles. We did meet people with completely different backgrounds from ourselves, but what surprised me most were the similarities that we found between ourselves and everyone we met. Many people talk about differences, but we have so much more in common with the families we lived with and the students we taught than anything else. I learned that we are all part of the same world and it is our responsibility to teach each other and help each other in any way we can." – *Elizabeth Arkell*

"The trip was never about noticing the discrepancies of lifestyle and infrastructure. Immediately it became apparent that our lives were not only similar, but rather Utha possessed a culture and a community far richer in love and relationships than we could ever imagine. We built libraries, ran camps, and taught in classrooms; however our legacy will not live on in our tangible actions or concrete structures but rather in the ideas we cemented into our students and our friends' minds. Upon leaving Utha, I was not left with tears or sadness. I was filled with hope and excitement for the future of development and transactions of ideas that will create a village that exceeds not only my expectations but those of the world." – *Cameron Henderson*